

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for instant messaging comprising:
  - enabling a first instant messaging user, using a thin client device, to employ a presence server for initiating a communications channel between at least the first instant messaging user and a second instant messaging user; and
  - conducting instant messaging along said communications channel between said instant messaging users;
  - employing an instant messaging session object to enable a non-persistent type client to maintain a session for said communications channel; and
  - redirecting at least one client of the presence server of a previously opened session to another presence server.
2. (Currently Amended) A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and wherein said presence server is employed to simplify client-side connection negotiations associated with the thin client device to initiate said communications channel.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and wherein said conducting employs a first communication protocol between said first instant messaging user and said presence server and employs a second communication protocol, different from said first communication protocol, between said presence server and said second instant messaging user.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A system for instant messaging comprising:  
at least first and second communication devices; and  
a presence server operative to initiate a communications channel between at least first and second instant messaging users via said at least first and second communication devices, at least one of which employs a thin client, the presence server maintaining an instant messaging session object operative to enable non-persistent clients to maintain a session along said communications channel; and  
first and second communication protocols enabling communication between said presence server and said first and second communication devices, said first communication protocol supports redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

12. (Original) A system for instant messaging according to claim 11 and wherein said presence server is operative to simplify client-side connection negotiations to initiate said communications channel.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 11 ~~claim 15~~ and wherein said first and second communication protocols are different from each other.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and wherein said communication devices includes a thin client selected from the group consisting of a WAP client, a WML client, an IITML client or an HDML client.

22. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and wherein said presence server includes at least one session object storing session information.

23. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an audio file server associated with said presence server.

24. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an IVR operative to interface between a telephone and said presence server.

25. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an account information server for validating user access to the presence server.

26. (Original) A system according to claim 24 and wherein said presence server includes a client interface interfacing with said IVR.

27. (Original) A system according to claim 24 and wherein said presence server includes a message cache.

28. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an HTTP/WAP server through which a web user may be connected to said presence server.

29. (Original) A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an external server enabling communication between said presence server and an instant messaging service.

30. (New) A method for instant messaging comprising:

enabling a first instant messaging user, using a thin client device, to employ a presence server for initiating an active session on a communications channel between at least the first instant messaging user and a second instant messaging user;

conducting text-based instant messaging on the communications channel between the first instant messaging user and the second instant messaging user; and

enabling the presence server to maintain the active session for the communications channel on behalf of the thin client device even though the thin client device is disconnected from the presence server.

31. (New) A method as in claim 30 further comprising:

after the thin client device has been at least temporarily disconnected from the presence server, enabling the first instant

messaging user via thin client device to utilize the communications channel again by reconnecting the thin client to the presence server via the active session.

32. (New) A method as in claim 31 further comprising:

employing use of an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system to receive a message from the first instant messaging user for transmission over the communications channel to the second instant messaging user.

33. (New) A method as in claim 32 further comprising:

via at least partial use of the IVR system, recording an audio message initiated by the first instant messaging user from a telephone; and

communicating a hyperlink to the audio message in a text-based instant message delivered to the second instant messaging user.

34. (New) A method as in claim 33 further comprising:

receiving a request from a third instant messaging user to connect to a communications channel associated with a previously active session associated with another presence server; and

redirecting the third instant messaging user to the other communications channel associated with the previous session.